



**Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks**

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ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT CHECKLIST

PART I. PURPOSE OF AND NEED FOR ACTION

1. Project Title: Central Montana Shooting Complex (CMSC)

2. Type of Proposed Action:

Build a “5-Stand” shooting area

3. Location Affected by Proposed Action:

Central Montana Shooting Complex is approximately two miles north of Lewistown in Fergus County Montana. T15N, R18E Sec. 3: lots 1 & 2, S1/2Ne1/4



Map 1 – Map location of CMSC range complex.

4. Agency Authority for the Proposed Action: MCA 87-1-276 through 87-1-279 (Legislative established policies and procedures for the establishment and improvement of shooting ranges) and MCA 87-2-105 (Departmental authority to expend funds to provide training in the safe handling and use of firearms and safe hunting practices). The Montana Legislature has authorized funding for the establishment of a Shooting Range Development Program providing financial assistance for the development of shooting ranges. Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP) has responsibility for the administration of the program, including the necessary guidelines and procedures governing applications for funding assistance under the program.

To be eligible for grant assistance, a private shooting club or a private organization:

(a)(i) Shall accept in its membership any person who holds or is eligible to hold a Montana hunting license and who pays club or organization membership fees;

(ii) May not limit the number of members;

(iii) may charge a membership fee not greater than the per-member share of the club's or organization's reasonable cost of provision of services, including establishment, improvement, and maintenance of shooting facilities and other membership services; and

(iv) shall offer members occasional guest privileges at no cost to the member or invited guest and shall make a reasonable effort to hold a public sight-in day each September, when the general public may use the shooting range for a day-use fee or at no cost; or

(b) Shall admit the general public for a reasonable day-use fee.

5. Need for the Action(s): Sporting clays range is the only shotgun opportunity currently available at CMSC. When the sporting clays area is open, two nights a week, the rifle range has to be shut down for safety, and the reverse is also true. With a growing demand for more opportunities to use the range by shotgun and rifle users, another range is needed to be established at CMSC. The new dedicated range would likely be open every night. The proposed range would also provide an easier location to supervise and instruct youth groups versus the current more spread-out arrangement within the sporting clay range.

6. Objectives for the Action(s): The original range development plan called for a sporting clays area and an additional shotgun use area. The objective of the current proposed improvement is to continue with the development plan and build a 5-stand shotgun area. The new shotgun area could be used by shot gunners at anytime rather than being limited to two nights a week availability.

7. Project Size: estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected: The shooting complex is nested with a 160-acre agricultural area. The shooting complex's actual footprint is only 14.2 acres, which would include the proposed new shotgun area.

8. Affected Environment (A brief description of the affected area of the proposed project): The site is in the middle of an agricultural area of bench land primarily used for grazing with some being tilled. Agricultural practices on the surrounding areas will continue and grazing lease(s) were negotiated on the site for vegetation and weed control. The range construction has been ongoing for 6 years. This is a smaller area within the range complex, which has had three previous Environmental Assessments for initial construction of the range in 2005, in 2007 for further improvements, and in 2009 to finish the Sporting Clays Course by building the trails and shooting stations. In 2008 there had been \$50,000 in dirt work done for the planned sporting clays course. The 2008 project was not funded by Fish, Wildlife & Parks and subsequently did not require an additional EA.

9. Description of Project: Purchase, assemble and set-up a Promatic 5-stand shotgun shooting system. Site preparation is completed, so only the actual 5-stand operating system remains to be purchased and installed.

10. List any Other Local, State, or Federal Agency that has Overlapping or Additional Jurisdiction:
None

(a) Permits, Licenses and/or Authorizations:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Permit</u>	<u>Date Filed/#</u>
N/A		

Funding:

<u>Agency Name</u>	<u>Funding Amount</u>
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks	\$10,000

11. Affiliations, Cooperating Agencies, User Groups and/or Supporting Groups: CMSC's currently has over 1000 members with most being family memberships. There are many community users including BLM law enforcement, Montana Highway Patrol, Lewistown law enforcement agencies, Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service firearms training, Boy Scouts, 4H, Hunter Education, Montana National Guard, and Ducks Unlimited Greenwings. The Central Montana Silhouette Club, Central Montana Rifle Club, and the Black Powder Club have all participated on the board of directors. CMSC has made it known to all of the area law enforcement, youth organizations and hunters' education/safety programs all have free access to the facilities. The club has an active and growing Defensive Pistol League and a Cowboy Action group.

12. History of the Planning and Scoping Process, and Any Public Involvement: Proposed range improvements proposals have been discussed within the membership of the club, the associated project vendors, and contractors.

13. List of Agencies Consulted/Contacted During Preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks

14. Names, Address and Phone Number of Project Sponsor:

Dale Pfau, P.O. Box 780, Lewistown, MT 59457 (406) 538-9408

15. Other Pertinent Information:

The Central Montana Shooting Complex has had environmental assessments (EAs) for previous FWP funded construction projects in 2005, 2007 and 2009. This EA is a fourth in the proposed shooting complex master plan. Consequently the 2005, 2007 and 2009 environmental assessments for the CMSC are applicable here, and appropriate portions should be tiered for this EA. The 2005 assessment was an analysis of the entire range complex's environment and the 2007 and 2009 EAs addressed the specific actions proposed. Those broad environmental assessments should be tiered for use in the continuation of this project.

Shooting range applications require the participant's governing body to approve by resolution its submission of applications for shooting range-funding assistance. Resolution Date: March 28, 2011

PART II. IDENTIFICATION OF THE PREFERRED ALTERNATIVES

The proposed alternative A, alternative B and the no action alternative were considered.

- **Alternative A (Proposed Alternative)** is as described in Part I, paragraph 9 (Description of Project). For the construction of a 5-Stand shotgun shooting area.
- **Alternative B (No Action Alternative)** Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks Shooting Range Development Grant money would be denied and the area will remain as an active shooting range without improvements proposed.

Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented: Only the proposed alternative and the no action alternative were considered. There were no other alternatives that were deemed reasonably available, nor prudent. Neither the proposed alternative nor the no action alternative would have significant negative environmental or potentially negative consequences.

There are beneficial consequences to acceptance of the **Proposed Alternative (A)** for construction of a 5-Stand shotgun shooting area.

The **No Action Alternative (B)** would be to not fund the improvements and the range will continue on with present conditions. Land use would remain the same.

Describe any Alternatives considered and eliminated from Detailed Study:
NONE

List and explain proposed mitigating measures (stipulations): None

PART III. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

Abbreviated Checklist – The degree and intensity determines extent of Environmental Review. An abbreviated checklist may be used for those projects that are not complex, controversial, or are not in environmental sensitive areas.

Table 1. Potential impact on physical environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Unique, endangered, fragile, or limited environmental resources				X		
2. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats				X		#2
3. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
4. Vegetation cover, quantity & quality				X		
5. Water quality, quantity & distribution (surface or groundwater)				X		#5
6. Existing water right or reservation				X		
7. Geology & soil quality, stability & moisture				X		
8. Air quality or objectionable odors				X		
9. Historical & archaeological sites				X		#9
10. Demands on environmental resources of land, water, air & energy				X		
11. Aesthetics				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

2. & 5. There are no live streams or ponds on the site and no delineated wetlands.

9. This project uses no federal funds nor does it take place on state owned or controlled property; therefore, the Federal 106 Regulations and the State Antiques Act do not apply.

Table 2. Potential impacts on human environment.

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Below
1. Social structures and cultural diversity				X		
2. Changes in existing public benefits provided by wildlife populations and/or habitat				X		
3. Local and state tax base and tax revenue				X		
4. Agricultural production				X		
5. Human health				X		#5
6. Quantity & distribution of community & personal income				X		
7. Access to & quality of recreational activities				X		#7
8. Locally adopted environmental plans & goals (ordinances)				X		
9. Distribution & density of population and housing				X		
10. Demands for government services				X		
11. Industrial and/or commercial activity				X		

Comments (A description of potentially significant, or unknown, impacts and potential alternatives for mitigation must be provided.)

5. Range site plans, construction and the ongoing operational and maintenance plans meet the standards of safety for the range participants and the public at large.

7. Range will provide year round controlled access and fulfils a need for a range to accommodate law enforcement training, hunter education, and public shooting.

PART IV. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

All of the pertinent or potential impacts of the project have been reviewed, discussed, and analyzed. None of the project reviewed were complex, controversial, or located in an environmentally sensitive area. The projects being implemented are already on an existing range/alterd areas that together with the insignificant environmental effects of the proposed action, indicates that this should be considered the final version of the environmental assessment. There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative. The history of the Central Montana Shooting Sports Complex providing safe shooting opportunities to its members and the public indicates support for the proposed alternative. Therefore, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks should approve the proposed alternative (A) for the improvements as outlined in Part I, Para. 9.

PART V. ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES

Does the proposed action involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely harmful if they were to occur? NO

Does the proposed action have impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant? This proposed action has no impacts that are individually minor, but cumulatively significant or potentially significant. Cumulative impacts have been assessed considering any incremental impact of the proposed action when they are combined with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, and no significant impacts or substantially controversial issues were found. There are no extreme hazards created with this project and there are no conflicts with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan.

Recommendation and justification concerning preparation of EIS:

There are no significant environmental or economic impacts associated with the proposed alternative; therefore an EIS is not required.

PART VI. EA CONCLUSION SECTION

Individuals or groups contributing to, or commenting on, this EA:

Dale Pfau, P.O. Box 780, Lewistown, MT 59457
MT Fish Wildlife and Parks

EA prepared by:

GENE R. HICKMAN
MS Wildlife Management
Ecological Assessments
Helena, MT 59602

Date Completed: July 26, 2011

Describe public involvement, if any:

This draft EA will be advertised on FWP's website and through a legal ad in the Lewistown News - Argus announcing a public comment period. A press release will also announce the project and comment period. The deadline for comments will be 5:00 p.m., August 31, 2011.